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MORTAL MAN.

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

TO MY SON,

JOHN ARAGO EASTON.

THE AUTHOR.

MORTAL MAN.

CHAPTER I.

ARGUMENT.

DAWN OF REASON.

Reason the Outgrowth of Experience and Pathway of Progress.

Primitive man viewing the convulsions of nature. Would through fear supplicate this unknown power to spare. Man's physical and mental relationship to the brute. Birth, growth, maturity and decay of mind and matter.

When first man's brain assumed the power of thought,
His reason dawned; experience reason taught.
He looked about him, wondered whence he came;
Nude and untutored felt no pang of shame.
Experience taught the little that he knew,
His tastes were simple and his wants were few.
When slumb'ring nature from repose awoke,
And lightning in its deep-voiced thunder spoke,
Awe-stricken man would then this power invoke.

When cyclones swept and wrathful torrents pour'd,
In fear man prayed, while beasts in terror roared.
No mightier form than image of his own,
Can man conceive to picture power unknown.
Presumptuous man, born but to bloom and fade,
Creates his God as he himself is made.
If power can teach us our mysterious source,
That power is nature in its backward course.
It seems the key to mortal man's descent,
From time remote o'er every continent;
And proves his wants, increased with power of mind,
Till now evolved, he's cultured and refined.
'Tis through his senses all his wisdom's taught
By sad experience and with dangers fraught;
And now triumphant, Lord of earth and sea,
He scorns his lowly birth and pedigree.
From water first we trace the living forms,
Sure as from clouds we trace descending storms.
As vegetation springs from parent earth,
Man follows in the higher scale of birth.
The brain, the throne, wherein the mind of man,

Dispatches thought and takes it on again.
Thought travels faster than the lightning's pace;
It visits worlds unknown, yet's lost in space.
From trifling things it soars to themes sublime;
The mind is mortal and is prey to time.
We see ourselves, and ask, why we should be,
Unto ourselves, a living mystery.
As we behold the heavens with stars arrayed,
Like regal crowns with precious gems inlaid,
And view the awful might of unknown power,
And hear the billows of old ocean roar,
Spellbound we gaze in wonderment and fear,
And supplicate that power our prayer to hear.
We speculate and argue as we can
To trace the origin of mortal man.
We think from reason (wisdom's only guide),
Mankind and apes in kinship are allied;
In these blurr'd copies of ourselves we see
Our source evolved, and trace our ancestry.
Man, lordly monarch, conscious of his power,
Would cease to grovel and aspiring soar;

Yet, this poor weakling enters life in tears;
Nurses the breast the same as apes and bears.
Dependent, at his mother's feet he creeps;
Weary and restless, when she sings he sleeps.
His waking cry her list'ning ear alarms,
With tender care she folds him in her arms.
His little wants by her are understood;
His aches, his pains and when to give him food.
Love is implanted in all creatures born;
They battle for their offspring, for them mourn;
The same as man's, their senses wisdom teach;
They act their wisdom, and they look their speech.
Each living creature on this rolling sphere
Clings to its life, and longs to linger here;
Let us from nature reason, source of truth,
And trace both man and beast's developed growth.
Their flesh and blood in substance is the same,
Brute instinct—reason—with another name.
And for the ills that flesh and blood endure,
For all her children nature gives a cure.
Her healing herbs that grace the flow'ry field,

For man and beast a health restorer yield.
Man from a structural point, does surely show
A close resemblance to the brutes below.
His massive shoulders, and his thick set neck
And tapering loins his Tauris build bespeak.
His nails are naught but rudiment'ry claws.
E'en now he'll use them true to instinct's laws.
Affrighted, like the beast his hair will rise;
In fear he trembles, and at times he cries.
He laughs and chatters as the monkeys do,
Talks like a parrot, oft more foolish, too.
Men differ in their structures and their minds,
As do all other forms of other kinds.
That ape is wiser, man can plainly see,
Than is the fish, and higher in degree.
'Tis safe to say, as ev'ry action shows,
Knows more than fish, than man above him knows.
Yet from the fish to ape, no wider span
Doth bridge the chasm than from ape to man.
The insect forms that tarry scarce a day,
Like vapors rise, like vapors pass away;

Still other forms that linger half a year,
Come with the leaves and with them disappear.
Who knows but what their lives may seem a span,
As long to them, as thine to thee, O, man!
In childhood, days seem weeks and months seem years;
As age creeps on time swiftly disappears;
Weighty structures do no assurance give,
That bulk and strength will lighter forms outlive.
The loathsome toad, the turtle, e'en the crow—
Yea, croaking ravens linger here below
More years than man, who claims that he was made
Lord over all in Eden's blissful shade.
Beasts are not wise, yet wisdom teach the wise;
Excess they shun, no low ambitions rise.
While in their breasts they harbor love and hate,
Passion warms them only to propagate.
On weaker forms and herbage they subsist,
They do not toil, yet struggle to exist;
Endowed with senses more acute than ours,
Their instinct oft' surpasses reasoning powers.
Nutritious grasses and the pois'nous weed,

They gather one—the other leave for seed.
Tender feeling is not confined to man,
Not he alone, who feels remorse and pain—
Love, hate and fear all conscious life possess,
From mortal man to beast in wilderness.
We're not created. We are nature's plants.
She brought us forth, and she supplies our wants.
"But, who made nature?" ask the would-be wise;
"My God. Not yours," each devotee replies.
But, who made space and co-eternal time?
Nature replies: "I am the source sublime."
Time co-eternal, with first cause, records
Space void of matter and the birth of gods.
Say rise we from the dead, renew our breath,
'Twould be a law, the same as life and death.
Self-preservation mortal life protects;
Self-love, thro' hope, immortal life expects.
Unconscious babe, by nature's law brought forth,
Its little mind matures with body's growth.
The growth of mind on matter doth depend.
Matures with matter, and has mortal end.

Sweet strains of music pleasing to the ear,
The sound proclaims some instrument we hear.
Intelligence none can conceive, aside
From living substance and to form allied.
Declining years, weak form and mind at last,
Age draws from mem'ry, lives within the past.
But once a man and twice a child 'tis true;
Our advent children and our exit, too.
Man is mortal, reasoned from nature's source.
Zeal deaf to reason, hope's his last recourse.
Though painful to his mind this mortal plan,
He clings to life and hopes to live again.
E'en when he sings, "This earth is not my home,"
He dreads the journey and the time to come.
Sure in argument of some blest abode,
Fears the dark river and the unknown road.
The life, by ancients deem'd to be the soul,
Has ceased to live united as a whole;
And, independent of all matter, ne'er
Has life been seen or known to re-appear.
The cares of life fall gently as the dew

On all who wisely nature's law pursue;
But those who dare eternal laws transgress,
Cut short their lives in payment for excess.

CHAPTER II.

Argument.

Self-love the fount of immortality. Delusions of hope. Force the great factor that prevails in nature. The mission of life—the love of sex, of offspring and self-love.

The theory man is immortal, springs
From fond desire to dwell midst living things;
And thus he builds, while lingering here below,
In fancy's realms immortal place to go.
And in those realms, sweet songs shall please his ear;
The same sweet songs he loved on earth to hear.
Eternal rest shall be his portion there;
He fancies this—but knows not when nor where,
For his conception of true happiness,
Is endless life—enjoyment as in this.
Man thinking for himself will think the good,
To please his fancy as his taste with food.
Self-love here masters all that reason gives,

Ignores all argument—immortal lives.
Hence reason is of rightful power denied;
Self-love for reason has false hope supplied.
What's hope? 'Tis vain delusion of the mind,
A balm beyond to soothe the woes behind.
'Tis welcome guest that flatters ev'ry ear;
The wise disclaim it—yet they list to hear.
Pleased with the prospect of some future good,
It checks the flow of present trouble's flood.
It follows, then, that men themselves delude,
And trust to hope, for reason misconstrued.
Belief's not evidence of proven things,
'Tis hoped for good, this consolation brings.
Man will believe to meet his present needs;
Mysterious food imagination feeds—
Till tales oft told, repeated o'er and o'er,
Seem solid facts and oracles of lore.
How vast the gulf to mortals here below,
Between the banks of what they think and know.
The facts are few as gems among the rocks,
The rot they think would fill a million books.

Pleasures of hope the ills of life alloy,
And picture pleasures that we ne'er enjoy;
Yet pain and pleasure, yea! Hope, grief and fear,
Are but conditions of existence here.
They are conditions that can ne'er exist,
Of that existence that doth death resist.
It is the individual that lives,
Condition here each joy, each sorrow gives,
And circumstances change the course of man
From course marked out to drift to sea again.
Nor is reward—the merit of the just—
Bestowed on those who place in God their trust.
When we contemplate power to us well known,
Of King or Queen upon an earthly throne,
We then to the great ruling power apply
The title "God" and place his throne on high.
'Tis then we feel that wisdom reigns, not chance,
Yet we are helpless ones of circumstance;
Uncertainty of human life is dear,
'Tis hopeful expectation comforts here—
And bids us live, self-flattered as we go,

Some blissful change the future will bestow.
In pain we suffer, and in sickness fret;
With health restored those feelings we forget.
E'en hunger's pangs that gnaw the vital force
We ne'er recall; appeased we then rejoice.
Thus does kind nature make our miseries less
In death's dread hour with sweet unconsciousness.
Now let us take another view of man,
And all his motives, all his actions scan.
He bows to Baal, at his shrine implores;
Mammon's the god he worships and adores.
Attained the object of his fond desire,
Abundance gives him power to more acquire.
In humble life his wants are simple, few;
With wealth comes power and power his wants renew.
With schemes for gain, he racks his fertile brain,
And though he's rich, he feels he's poor again.
His wants are legion, yet his needs are few;
He wants the earth, and life eternal, too;
Selfish in all his acts and all his ways,
He'll rob the poor and give his god his praise.

Vain, inconsistent, ever prone to wrong,
Lords o'er the poor, but cringes to the strong.
Life is a constant struggle to exist;
The weak must perish and the strong subsist.
Force is the factor that immortal reigns
By right of conquest, and by might sustains.
In social natures we are sure to find
Congenial traits and unity of mind.
The ant is social and the busy bee;
In concert toils in perfect harmony.
In swine the social instinct is unknown;
In fact, a hog will fatten well alone.
These swinish traits in man we often see,
Preferring self to better company.
Again we'll view him, simple and sublime,
See if he's not the product of the clime
In which he's born, and raised, and lives and dies,
'Neath frigid, temperate, or neath sunny skies.
In climate temperate and in fertile soil,
He earns his bread by hard, laborious toil.
He feeds his flocks and herds, and harvests grain;

In fall he sows, in summer reaps again.
'Neath tropic skies where sluggish brains prevail
Spontaneous food no labor doth entail;
Ambition sleeps—awakes to plenty—eats
Kind nature's best and very choicest sweets.
The shiftless thrive for nature them supports,
While cultured man to work and art resorts.
Nature is kind to everything that lives,
Exacts but little where she little gives.
The average mind of mortal man below,
A sluggish stream, save when his passions flow,
Pursues the even tenor of his ways,
His weaker mind a stronger mind obeys;
He takes no walks in "nature's flowery fields"
To seek the knowledge that her storehouse yields.
His mental pinions by his side he keeps,
Disused they weaken and he helpless creeps.
The master mind will dare the cloud-capped height,
Control the lightning and illume the night.
'Twill with a wire this mundane sphere surround,
Commune with nature and her laws profound.

Thus master minds above their fellows soar,
Till mind alone we deem the source of power.
Hence mind controls the mind, 'tis safe to state,
Inheritance transmits each leading trait;
And be the parent, body and in mind
A vigorous tree the shoot is so inclined—
To follow the ancestral trait and plane—
To crime, to virtue, or to acts insane,
That we may safely say beyond a chance,
The source of traits is from inheritance.
A flower has beauty and gives sweet perfume,
Like man it dies to make for others room.
This perfume we may call the soul of flower,
The sap, the blood, imparts its vital power;
And when the stem is withered and decayed,
Its perfume's lost and all its beauties fade,
But from its seed the floweret, like the man,
Its kind transmits to flourish once again.
The old is dead, this painful truth we read,
The old must die, the young the old succeed.
The pleasures that our mortal lives attend,

Self-love persuades will have no mortal end.
'Twere wise to cherish hope to calm our fears;
It soothes the mind, as grief assuaged by tears;
Yet hoped for good and tears like rain may fall;
The sleeping dead return no answering call;
Immortal man would harbor not a fear,
Were bliss awaiting mortal dangers here.
O, boastful man! Would'st thou attempt to soar?
Would'st fathom space to taste the sweets of power?
Would'st find the first great cause from thee withheld?
To know the cause whereof all space is filled?
Sufficient to thy every need to know,
That order reigns, that seasons come and go;
That health and strength are given thee for good,
And that the earth supplies thy wants with food.
Yet, would'st thou be a God to know all things,
The source from whence all law, all order springs?
E'en then thou would'st thy very God disown,
Usurp his power and sit upon his throne.
Desist, thou fool, and not thy form disgrace:
Thou art but dust and earth thy dwelling place.

The very heaven you laud, and hell you fear,
On earth are found, for thou dost make them here.
Does then the power controlling nature's force
Grieve at bad conduct and if good rejoice?
Or if our nature from this power derives,
Both good and evil, evil good survives:
Then are we as this power would have us be,
Perfect, imperfect, each in due degree.
Earth in its infancy, a vap'ry mass,
Then sea of fire without one blade of grass.
Unnumbered centuries it rolled in space,
Revolving, cooling, fit for dwelling place.
Earth, too, is mortal and shall pass away;
'Twill linger epochs, then to time a prey,
Nor missed in space's unfathomed boundless sea;
Earth is to space as man to earth—a flea.
Self-evident some unknown power controls.
'Tis not self-evident mankind have souls
Created man would have his course marked out,
Glide smoothly on without one fear or doubt,
Would have a channel clear and well defined,

To guide his current—not unsettled mind.
Man has no guide save what experience gives;
If wise obeys it and in temperance lives;
Enjoys in plenty is in want distressed;
Health is the fount of human happiness.
The true philosophy of life is this:
Enjoy to-day's, wait not to-morrow's bliss.
A good digestion, free from aches and pains,
Will yield more comforts than superior brains;
Nor heat your blood by anger's rising tide;
Let reason reign and conscience be your guide.
Pulse is the tide that floods and ebbs in man,
In anger high, in peace it falls again.
Relentless time is ever rolling on,
A few sad years, man's pilgrimage is run.
Why fear we death, grim harvester with scythe,
If we're immortal and his touch survive?
The only clime where mind is fairly grown,
And man enlightened, is the temperate zone;
And this small field embraces here below,
The thinking few of lives that ebb and flow.

Sea monsters of the deep, prodigious size,
Outride the storms, as waves on waves arise.
In numbers far terrestrial life exceed,
Like beasts of prey on one another feed.
Beasts, birds and reptiles, fish and mortal man,
Are kin in nature and in structural plan;
The love of life the one prevailing tie,
For which all struggle, all unwilling die.
And man's the greatest monster of them all,
To feed and clothe him all the others fall.
All nature is in constant warfare, strife,
From mortal man to lower forms of life.
Each stomach is an ever yawning tomb;
To stay its cravings seals a victim's doom.
Since, then, to every conscious life is given
A tie to earth, why not for all a heaven?
Since one great architect designed them all,
Why not for all the trumpet sound its call?
Does perfect work condemn to Pluto's shade,
Imperfect work condemns the one that made.
Does God send rain to help the sons of toil,

One crop to ripen and another spoil?
Can man trace blessings to his God direct?
In time of danger will his God protect?
The piercing winds, the driving sleet and rain,
Fall on the good, regardless of their pain.
Prayer is not answered, vain the pleading task;
Were gifts bestowed, man would not work but ask.
From prehistoric age to present day,
Man's yielding reason, impulse to obey,
Against his reason does his will rebel.
He's slave to will, to habit, too, as well.
Man to himself is often times untrue,
And does the things resolved he would not do;
Nor lives the man who to himself can say—
Conscience approves my conduct day by day.
If breathes there one, he's surely void of wit,
He's fool or knave or else a hypocrite.
To youth the future seems to hold in store
The rarest treasures, and of value more
Than for the old who've trod the road before.
No ripe experience of the older grown,

Availeth youth 'till tasted of his own;
And while he treads almost the same routine,
And sees the sights that others oft have seen,
His wisdom comes as wisdom only can
In studying nature and in studying man.
Volcanic fires are safety-valves to vent
The festering pus 'neath crust of continent.
Untutored man beheld the awful flame,
And from this source a hell derived its name.
In viewing birds glide gracefully in space,
Suggested wings for man's celestial race.
The pregnant mother feels the quick'ning spark,
And does by fright her unborn offspring mark;
These painful facts we learn—they're not revealed—
Save what our reason through our senses yield.
Self-love and self-protection are the same,
Thus man fears power, not knowing whence it came.
Man always takes upon himself the task
To rob the weaker, of the stronger ask.
Behold weak nations to the stronger bow,
All feel the fear of an avenging foe.

Force is the tutor in great nature's school,
Right yields to might, enforcing nature's rule.
The history of each nation's progress shows
One nation prospers by another's woes.
We drove the Indians from the plain and wood,
Not for their own, but for our selfish good,
'Till now in scattered bands they aimless roam,
Each state their graveyard and neglected tomb.
Enlightened nations most esteemed for good
Delight to shed their weaker brother's blood;
The brighter shines the intellectual star,
The more destructive are its arts in war.
The motive weigh that prompts the mighty deed,
The fruit is selfish, for self-love's the seed.
Self-approbation for good conduct here,
Rewards each mortal with a conscience clear.
Perchance great deeds we never may perform,
Greatness has fears and sleeps in dread alarm.
Love is the only tie beneath the sun
Where mutual interests are the same as one.
All love is based on passion; it inspires

To lofty aims, yet yields to low desires.
Earth ope's her womb in spring to nature's call,
Brings forth a harvest for the good of all.
The love of sex runs riot in the spring,
Dame nature gives new life to every thing.
The blood is changing, dormant passion thaws;
Love knows no reason save wise nature's laws.
Paternal love is love of self to see
Itself again in its posterity.
In songs of love, birds warble in the spring,
To charm a mate right lustily they sing.
Language of male the female comprehends,
They join their hearts until the season ends.
For beauty's charms the amorous males contest,
And with the victor female builds her nest.
Love's language by all life is understood;
'Tis mutual breathing and for mutual good.
The mission of all life below, above,
Is love of sex, of offspring and self-love.

CHAPTER III.

Argument.

Vice countenanced by, yet subject to, law, is a safeguard to the better elements of society. On the senses. Sensation the source of all knowledge. The five senses simply five branches of sensation. All are feeling.

What shall we say of monster vice unsaid?
Alluring monster with a Hydra head.
Vice is essential, when law draws the line
To vent the passions, but the flood confine.
'Tis in man's nature ne'er to be removed,
A moral blot by custom disapproved.
Wise rules of custom in their aims aspire,
To subdue vices and control desire.
Vice is so tempting that the average man
Yields and repents and then he yields again.
Seductive vice will virtuous mind alloy,
Its touch will poison, its embrace destroy.
Encouraged, 'tis an ever growing sore,

Physician—law, must cauterize to cure.
Man's greed for gold will from the right entice,
And find excuse for fair-appearing vice.
He'll yield to passion, oft will seek the chance,
True to his nature and inheritance.
For mind and matter are allied so strong
They yield to nature and delight in wrong.
How oft the harlot as the virtuous dress'd
Will seem all virtue and of it possessed,
She'll stalk abroad, a brazen thing, despised,
Or modestly, a cunning whore disguised.
Some yield at once, while other cast aside.
Degrees of vice are but degrees of pride;
What age will do the tender youth will shun;
What youth will do the old before have done;
What youth will do it never thought it would,
While what it does it wonders how it could.
Thus every rule of conduct and all law,
Experience taught them while the wise foresaw—
They'd give to man more comforts and less tears,
Protect his person and protract his years.

What of the senses that instruct the mind,
We boast of five, yet only one we find.
Sensation is the great paternal root
From which all knowledge through its branches shoot;
The only sense that mortal men possess
Is one of feeling, nothing more nor less.
We gaze on nature dressed in living green,
And feel by sight enraptur'd with the scene;
But when we see a loathsome reptile creep,
Or view some frightful monster of the deep,
We feel that fear within the human breast
That shocks us so, it ne'er can be expressed.
As we inhale the fragrant flower in bloom
We feel delighted with its sweet perfume.
Offensive odors, that in air prevail,
We feel as though we'd rather not inhale.
In hearing music's sweet mellifluous sound
We feel—aye, feel—a rapturous thrill abound.
But when a direful discord greets the ear,
We're not enamored with the sound we hear.
We tell by taste the bitter from the sweet,

And feel to correspond with things we eat.
We feel by touch the magic thrill of love,
That rapturous thrill that only love can move.
Sensation is the fount from which there springs
Reason and instinct of all living things.
Void of sensation matter will decay;
Life is sensation in poor mortal clay.
One other sense superior to the rest
Is common sense, the rarest and the best.

CHAPTER IV.

Argument.

Man's conception of Deity is simple or complex corresponding with his mental development. The credulity of faith. Instinct and reason defined.

The lone Fuegian of a dreary isle
Say, how does he the long sad years beguile,
Where frowning nature seldom deigns to smile?
'Mid ceaseless storms that on his coast prevail
He seeks for food, the carcass of some whale
That angry seas have cast upon the shore,
To stay his hunger and increase his store.
A rigorous climate and a cloud-veiled sky,
Primeval forests that the sun defy,
No merry songsters cheer the lonely wood,
No music breaks the awful solitude,
Save sighing winds through leafless branches drear.
Join with the waves in requiem sad to hear.
Yet lives he there, unsheltered, oft unfed,

Unclad, untidy—cold damp earth his bed;
A child of want whose love's instinctive lust;
Too weak to reason, too unsafe to trust;
Whose highest aim is vengeance quenched with blood,
He knows no mercy and reveres no god.
Spirits alone enshrine his feeble brain,
The good bring food, the evil wind and rain.
Now, in the scale of wisdom is he weighed,
His dross extracted and his worth assayed;
For men place value on the thoughts of those
Whose master minds their lofty thoughts disclose.
'Tis oft advanced, to prove a god exists,
That every race believes it will be blest;
But when the race can comprehend scarce four,
The god they worship knows but little more.
Each to their god ascribe a mighty power,
To 'venge their wrongs in battle's direful hour.
Complex or simple all beliefs will be,
Till mind evolved evolves its deity.
So sanguine are we others must be wrong,
We cry they're false and praise our own in song,

Forgetting that the feeble brain might be
At least sincere and near the truth as we.
The feeble mind is star of lesser light,
By clouds obscured it still illumes the night;
Nor does it follow in a theme like this,
Where naught is known of future happiness,
Who's right or wrong, since none can ever know
From whence they came or where they'll surely go.
From creeping things to mortal man who'd soar,
Our parent nature imparts instinct power.
Instinct is guide to lead the little one,
Foreshadowing dawn of reason's rising sun;
While reason is the risen orb of day
Enjoyed by minds, evolved but to obey.
One is the metal crude and in the ore,
The other smelted and of value more.
Yet each pass current, have intrinsic worth,
Meet all the needs of all the lives of earth.
The sightless fishes and the eyeless worm,
They grope in darkness and they aimless squirm;
And shall we say, that God created them

Simply to prove some superstitious whim?
In depths of sand untouched for countless years
Search as we may no living worm appears;
Yet take the sand and mix therewith some loam,
The warmth and moisture will develop worm.
The pregnant germs were dormant in the earth,
Till changed conditions burst them into birth.
From out the mighty maze of chaos sprung
Law, order, worlds, e'en man whereof I've sung.
From simple forms to structures more complex,
Time has evolved the gender of the sex.
The gen'ral public casts on him a slur
Who dares its tide; he's no philosopher.
But he who reasons with the flooding tide
Swims with the current and to fame doth ride.
An eager throng await him on the shore
And hail him great, aye, great forever more.
The brightest minds believe in future state;
Have hopeful reasons, expectations great;
Still doubts at times find lodgment in the breast,
Where doubts abide there is no peaceful rest;

And he who has no doubts and has no fears
Is credulous, believing most he hears;
For faith through zeal oft'times assumes to know—
While reason doubts, and says, I think it's so.
A willing sacrifice the martyr dies
Defending creed, believing he will rise
And shine triumphant on that glorious day,
When God shall summon and the dead obey.
To die for the'ry fails to prove it true;
He could be wrong and be a martyr, too.
It simply shows the martyr was sincere;
Ne'er proves a better life awaits than here.
'Twere poor philosophy, and bad the text,
To yield a certain for uncertain next.
The youth aspires and pines for man's estate;
Man, too, aspires, and would be rich and great.
With greatness, power, and power for fame aspires;
With this attained still something more desires.
The cost of fame, for which the great contend,
Is human blood and armies to defend.
The path of progress ever since the flood

Is crimson stained and stained with human blood.
A bloodless fame is martyr to some cause
That ne'er attains the honor crimson draws.
Fame, frothy nectar, is but transient bliss,
Drawn from the fount of other's happiness.
The shadow, then, that mighty fame reflects
Yields not the substance that the heart expects;
And those who seek it seldom count the cost,
Of spirits broken and ambitions lost.
Ambition, boundless as the boundless space,
Conspires to ruin or to rule the race.
Yet man without it has no port in view,
Has lost his bearings, will be shipwrecked, too.
Honor and fame should only those attend
Who battle wrong and ever right defend.

CHAPTER V.

Argument.

Reason undermines faith. The assurance of ignorance. Creeds ingenious theories of the human brain. As death approaches nature reconciles all her children to final dissolution. On the resurrection of the body. Speculation as to other worlds. Man conspires with hope to dethrone his reason. Duty the highest attainable goal of excellence.

How wonderful is man and how complex,
How passing wonderful the law of sex.
Perchance 'twere wise to trust to faith alone;
Reason undermines faith's foundation stone;
Down falls the temple of our fondest hope,
Cold science searches as with telescope,
To find some pleasing star in space unknown,
Where all congenial minds enjoy as one.
Self-flat'ry, self-delusion and self-love
Presume to know what reason fails to prove.
Proud science baffled, never yet has found,
With all its lore that does with facts abound,
Why mankind suffer or why they enjoy,

Yet simple faith yields bliss without alloy.
Faith is a credulous and infant child,
A dwarf, that to its statue's reconciled.
It feasts at superstition's scanty board,
And calls unnatural diet savory food.
Wisdom seeks nature for each dainty rare;
Sage reason serves it, gives each guest its share.
The fertile brain will sup to full repast;
The feeble brain will nibble at the crust.
Such vast divergence in the scope of mind,
Was man created then was God unkind.
Then were God unkind or unwise his plan,
Of what avail are creeds of mortal man?
Creeds are ingenious the'ries of the brain,
By one set forth that hosts with zeal maintain.
We censure all, yet cling to one alone,
Nor know we why nor comprehend our own.
As we endeavor to contemplate space,
Lost in itself, and has no dwelling place,
The mind unsettled and the dizzy brain,
Thinks to no purpose, fails, then thinks again.

And so of time, and so of God, first cause,
And so of force obeying unknown laws.
And as we grapple with the great unknown,
We're over-matched, confused and overthrown.
Man's loftiest thought is but a random guess;
Ends in discomfiture and foolishness.
We simply know that many things exist,
And sad experience teaches what is best.
In pain we faint and consciousness is lost,
And so is all remembrance of the past;
Yet when we waken from those fainting sleeps,
The mind no record of duration keeps.
The mem'ry stops from time the faint began,
Foretaste of death and end of mortal man.
Proud spirit humbled 'neath the weight of years
Awaits the end, resigned to change that nears;
For mortal man, now feeble in his mind,
Is reconciled to leave this world behind.
His once bright eye, with glassy film o'ercast,
Foretells his doom and marks the hour his last.
The clouds of death shall shade him night and day,

And bid him sleep forever and for aye.
In this cold world of strife, his troubles o'er,
The place that knew him knows him now no more—
Save for the record of his life, that lives,
And in remembrance joy or sorrow gives.
The virtuous life speaks volumes for the dead;
The record lives, illumes the life it lead;
Nor missed, save from the circle of the few
Dear friends who mourn and quickly follow, too.
For every death some friend bereft will weep,
Where one survives ten thousand sweetly sleep.
Thus death prevails; the living are the few,
Gay signals floating o'er the buried crew.
And this is death—alike to man and beast,
Carnivorous mammals now for worms a feast.
Shall fleshless bones, the wreck of mortal man,
Their flesh resume—immortal live again?
Shall fountain of the mind, gray matter, brain,
Assume its functions and flow thought again?
Shall worms give back the morsels they devour,
Themselves decayed to feed the fragrant flower?

Shall flowers decayed and all their perfume lost,
Shall all be gathered and returned to dust?
Or, shall the earth dissolve our mortal clay,
'Till naught remains and all is passed away?
E'en flowers that graced and fed upon our tomb,
No longer nourished will refuse to bloom.
The perfumed breeze that winnows fragrance o'er
The living few that linger on the shore,
Is simply herald of that coming day,
When time shall summon and the earth decay.
For all is mortal; e'en the stars sublime
Will cease to twinkle in the lapse of time.
Naught is immortal save the great unknown;
Time is his sceptre and all space his throne.
No pictured fancy of a blessed abode
Can tempt poor mortals to behold their God;
When forced to go and molder in the dust,
Man clings to life and goes because he must.
Knew we that death were dawn of life more dear,
Where greater joys and lovelier sights appear,
'Twould have no terrors for the living here.

We'd launch our barks and sail for port serene,
And hail with joy the gulf of death between.
No absent pilot from beyond the vale
Returns to greet us with a friendly sail.
The absent ones we mourn, long gone before,
Still linger where no mortal may explore.
Oh! death; thou monster! all must view thy face,
Must feel thy touch and yield to thy embrace.
The sweets of life, delicious tastes of power,
That swell ambition like a sun-kissed flower,
But whet the passions for a broader swath,
And bind man closer to his mother earth.
Our parent earth, with all her scenes sublime,
Conceived in space fresh from the womb of time,
Unweaned as yet, the law of force obeys,
And draws her life from Sol's sustaining rays;
Whilst other worlds revolving round their suns,
Scarce in their teens are nature's little ones.
So other worlds to mortal man unknown,
Might far surpass the wonders of his own;
And in those worlds superior to mankind,

A race might dwell with higher type of mind,
As far above us in their range of thought
As mortal man above the beasts untaught.
With forms majestic and with features fair,
To harmonize with changed conditions there.
Their time as measured by their night and day,
As round its sun, their world would speed its way,
Would mean for them a longer day and year,
And longer life than for us pilgrims here.
And shall we thus presume that mortal man,
On this mere speck is nature's noblest plan?
Shall love of self, the fount of blissful hope,
Obscure its vision 'neath this narrow scope
And say, I am the great and only one
Immortal being 'neath the stars and sun?
For me alone doth God His worlds control—
And I alone have an immortal soul.
Say—rather let my finite mind desire
To err in reason than with hope conspire;
Yet faith, with eyes of hope, sees visions bright
Beyond the range of reason's keenest sight.

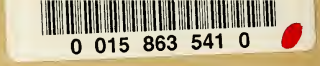
It views the budding of a heavenly shoot
That bears for mortals sweet immortal fruit.
For hope's bright fancy pictures the ideal,
A blissful Eden, time shall prove as real.
'Tis to the old as romance to the young,
The sweet fruition of a song unsung.
Earth's fairest scenes and springtime's balmy air
Are shadows here of living substance there.
Thrice curs'd the bard who'd advocate the wrong,
For honey'd fame to live again in song.
My duty's plain, and truth's distasteful prose
I would in truth—in truth alone disclose.
The consciousness of intellectual worth
Should ever prompt to principle and truth.
Make ev'ry action to the right conform,
Then are we reef'd to weather ev'ry storm.
Outride the waves of life's tempestuous sea,
Proud reason pilot and the conscience free.
Duty stands by the ship when tempest toss'd,
It braves all dangers, e'en when hope is lost.
HONOR, majestic monarch, seeks not fame
And dies a hero in stern duty's name.

EPITAPH.

Ye mortal men, when death your form enshrouds,
Your poor heart flutters and your memory clouds,
Kind nature soothes and leads you gently on,
Till in the west shall sink your setting sun.

Then on your graves let flowers profusely grow,
Dew quench their thirst while nourished from below;
Then plant we trees and let their roots consume
The moldering substance till the branches bloom.

On modest stones record each name and age;
And if, perchance, one live in History's page,
Then mortal man, e'en mortal though he be,
Twin brother is to immortality.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